

OCT 9 1961

Approved For Release 1999/09/16 : CIA-RDP70-0

STATINTL

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

THE WASHINGTON POST Monday, October 9, 1961 B23

President Waits His Turn at Club

By Drew Pearson

The resignation of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy from the elite and exclusive Metropolitan Club has raised

embarrassing questions for various politically minded club members, including some of the White House staff and Gov. Nelson Rockefeller of New York. Should they resign, Pearson too?

It has also focused attention on the fact that the Attorney General's elder brother, one John F. Kennedy, has not yet been taken into another Washington club—the Cosmos Club—though he's been on the waiting list for four months.

Unlike the Metropolitan Club, the Cosmos Club does extend guest privileges to Negroes, but it has been in no hurry to admit the President of the United States. The Metropolitan Club, in contrast, immediately extended honorary membership to President Kennedy, though he has not accepted.

Washington sightseeing guides sometimes get off this crack to tourists: "Over there is the Metropolitan Club, whose members have money but no brains. Over there the Cosmos Club, whose members have the brains, but no money. And here is the Army-Navy Club whose members have neither brains nor money."

Whether or not the levity of tourist guides is justified, the name of John F. Kennedy was proposed for membership in the Cosmos Club on June 23, by such distinguished

sponsors as the former president of Harvard, Dr. James B. Conant, and another Harvard professor, John K. Galbraith, now Ambassador to India. He was also seconded by this writer.

He is listed on the "proposed membership" rolls as "John F. Kennedy, writer, public official, President of the United States."

On the same day his name was submitted, that of his Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, "government official" was also listed.

Neither has been acted on by the Cosmos Club membership committee. The explanation lies in the stubbornly democratic regulations of the club. Applications are considered in the order of their submission. As vacancies occur, they are filled with qualified aspirants—the rule specifies that they must be distinguished by some form of intellectual achievement—on a first-come, first-served basis. Not even the historian and author who is now President of the United States rates an exception.

One man who is ahead of the President is Carl Rowan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, former correspondent for the Minneapolis Tribune and the first Negro proposed for Cosmos Club membership. Though the Cosmos Club extends guest privileges to Negroes, it has not yet admitted a Negro member. Rowan, sponsored by Raymond Gram Swing, the commentator, is expected to be the first.

Metropolitan Club

In the Metropolitan Club, two others have followed the example of Attorney General Kennedy and resigned—Am-

bassador Angier Biddle Duke and George Lodge, son of the recent GOP candidate for Vice President. If others follow them, it would cause quite an exodus. Members of the Metropolitan Club include not only Governor Rockefeller of New York, with a tremendous Negro vote, but Lee Hall, former chairman of the Republican National Committee, and an aspirant to be Governor of New York.

There is also Tom Finletter, President Kennedy's representative to NATO and a leader of the Democratic Reform Movement, who has eyed the senatorship from New York; Sinclair Weeks, former Secretary of Commerce; and Charles Mueller, also a former Secretary of Commerce.

High on the list of members is President Kennedy's stepfather-in-law, Hugh D. Auchincloss; also Dean Acheson, former Secretary of State; Allen Dulles, retired CIA chief, and Douglas Dillon, present Secretary of the Treasury.

The precedent for resignation in protest against the ban on Negroes might also be embarrassing to several prominent newspapermen, including Scotty Reston of the New York Times; Arthur Krock, also of the Times; Howland Evans of the New York Herald Tribune, a personal friend of President Kennedy, and Walter Lippmann, dean of the newspaper corps.

Then there is Eric Johnston, head of the motion picture producers, active in promoting American films in Africa and other areas where the color ban is not popular.

The Metropolitan Club's ban

on guest privileges for Negroes might likewise prove embarrassing to Gen. Alfred M. Gruenther, head of the American Red Cross; to Dan Kimball, former Secretary of the Navy, whose Aerojet Co. is dependent upon the Government for important orders; and to Frank Pace, head of General Dynamics, whose company is also heavily dependent upon the Government.

These are just a few members of the Metropolitan Club who have been placed on the griddle by racial discrimination and the resignations of Attorney General Kennedy, Ambassador Duke and George Lodge.

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